

Randolph Township Schools  
Randolph Middle School

# **Comic Book Theory: Understanding the Graphic Novel Curriculum**

*“With great power, comes great responsibility.”*

*Stan Lee*

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**Randolph Township Schools**  
**Department of Humanities**  
**Comic Book Theory: Understanding the Graphic Novel**

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## Randolph Township Schools

### **Mission Statement**

*We commit to inspiring and empowering all students in Randolph schools to reach their full potential as unique, responsible and educated members of a global society.*

### **Randolph Township Schools Affirmative Action Statement**

#### **Equality and Equity in Curriculum**

The Randolph Township School district ensures that the district's curriculum and instruction are aligned to the state's standards. The curriculum provides equity in instruction, educational programs and provides all students the opportunity to interact positively with others regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status.

N.J.A.C. 6A:7-1.7(b): Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973; N.J.S.A. 10:5; Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

# **RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **EDUCATIONAL GOALS**

### **VALUES IN EDUCATION**

The statements represent the beliefs and values regarding our educational system. Education is the key to self-actualization which is realized through achievement and self-respect. We believe our entire system must not only represent these values, but also demonstrate them in all that we do as a school system.

We believe:

- The needs of the child come first.
- Mutual respect and trust are the cornerstones of a learning community.
- The learning community consists of students, educators, parents, administrators, educational support personnel, the community and Board of Education members.
- A successful learning community communicates honestly and openly in a non-threatening environment.
- Members of our learning community have different needs at different times. There is openness to the challenge of meeting those needs in professional and supportive ways.
- Assessment of professionals (i.e., educators, administrators and educational support personnel) is a dynamic process that requires review and revision based on evolving research, practices and experiences.
- Development of desired capabilities comes in stages and is achieved through hard work, reflection and ongoing growth.

**Randolph Township Schools**  
**Department of Humanities**  
**Comic Book Theory: Understanding the Graphic Novel**

**Introduction**

The popularity of graphic novels is growing at such a rate that their very presence is altering the fabric of American society, in fact, a number of graphic novels have landed on top literary works lists. The allure of viewing visual art while simultaneously analyzing literature will engage students and inspire exploration and creativity. *Comic Book Theory: Understanding the Graphic Novel* is designed for students to learn the critical intricacies of how to read, interpret, and comprehend a graphic novel to fully gain an appreciation of the genre. With graphic novels, students will study social commentary, story elements, point of view, and purpose of dialogue. Differentiated assignments and assessments will allow students to apply their knowledge and ultimately create their own graphic narrative. Via an in depth study of graphic novels, students understanding of reading and writing narrative will be enhanced. Students will grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally as they consider essential questions pertaining to the course content. To achieve these goals, the course will be guided by the Common Core State Standards and goals established by the Randolph Township Board of Education.

**RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Curriculum Pacing Chart**  
**Humanities Department**

<b>SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT</b>	<b>UNIT NUMBER</b>	<b>CONTENT - UNIT OF STUDY</b>
<b>9 weeks</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Comic Book Theory: Understanding the Graphic Novel</b>

**RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Comic Book Theory: Understanding the Graphic Novel**

**Transfer:** Students will apply critical comprehension of the graphic novel as a genre to create an original graphic narrative.

<b>GOALS:</b>	<b>ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS</b>	<b>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</b>
RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	The graphic novel genre creates a unique narrative experience.	What is the value of creating a narrative utilizing both words and images?
RL.6.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	Heroes are often born of circumstance.	Why do some people accept the responsibilities that make them heroes?
RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.	World views can be expressed via social commentary.	What is the purpose of social commentary?
RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>SKILLS</b>
RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular ... scene ... fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.	<b>Students will know:</b>	<b>Students will be able to:</b>
RL.6.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.	Authors use a variety of literary devices to convey meaning.	Analyze examples of literary devices for meaning and author's purpose.
RL.6.7 Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.	Story elements are represented in both still images and written form in graphic novels.	Identify, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize the story elements within a graphic novel.
RL.6.8 Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.	Authors utilize different points of view for a desired effect on the reader.	Identify, evaluate, and synthesize different points of view in a text and their purpose.
RL.6.9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.	Graphic novels and narratives feature five main story arcs:	Define, identify and evaluate various story arcs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Man in a hole</li> <li>• Boy meets girl</li> <li>• From bad to worse</li> <li>• Which way is up</li> </ul>	

<p>RL.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>RL.7.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p>RL.7.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).</p> <p>RL.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.</p> <p>RL.7.6 Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.</p> <p>RL.7.7 Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).</p> <p>RL.7.9 Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.</p> <p>RL.7.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</p> <p>RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>RL.8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p>RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cinderella</li> </ul> <p>Use of purposeful dialogue is a driving force behind the plot of a story.</p> <p>Character interaction with both the written and visual setting has a direct influence on the plot of a story.</p> <p>“Heroes” of graphic novels are often reluctant to achieve their quest.</p> <p>Graphic novels often serve as social commentaries offering the author’s perspective on society.</p> <p>Authors develop themes in graphic novels with both writing and images.</p> <p>Authors use universal symbols, color, words, and background images to create feelings and emotions in the reader and characters in a text.</p> <p>The seven types of word/image combinations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word Specific</li> <li>• Picture Specific</li> <li>• Duo-Specific</li> <li>• Additive</li> <li>• Parallel</li> <li>• Montage</li> <li>• Interdependent</li> </ul> <p>Using both images and words, readers interpret the passage of time.</p> <p>Various transition methods allow the reader to infer sequential events when transitioning from one panel to another include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moment to Moment</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluate and synthesize the use of purposeful dialogue within a text and the manner in which it drives the plot of a story.</p> <p>Comprehend and predict the plot of a story based on character interaction with the setting.</p> <p>Analyze the reluctance of a hero and his/her quest.</p> <p>Identify and explain the metaphor of a social commentary and the author’s perspective.</p> <p>Interpret, analyze, and evaluate themes of a text as communicated through words and images.</p> <p>Interpret various symbols, color, words, and background images to comprehend meaning.</p> <p>Identify, analyze, and evaluate the seven types of word/image combinations.</p> <p>Analyze the passage of time in a given frame, between panels, size of panels, and size of gutter.</p> <p>Identify and synthesize the various transition methods utilized by the author and their desired effect.</p>
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<p>incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</p> <p>RL.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</p> <p>RL.8.5 Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.</p> <p>RL.8.6 Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.</p> <p>RL.8.7 Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.</p> <p>RL.8.9 Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new. vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</p> <p>W.6.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>W.6.3.a Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</p> <p>W.6.3.b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p>W.6.3.c Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</p> <p>W.6.3.d Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action to Action</li> <li>• Subject to Subject</li> <li>• Scene to Scene</li> <li>• Aspect to Aspect</li> <li>• Non-Sequitur</li> </ul> <p>Graphic artists can move the plot of a narrative, amplify emotion, and shift time with images that are independent of words.</p> <p>Graphic artists vary panel shape to evoke different feelings and emotions.</p> <p>Graphic narratives communicate real or imagined experiences or events.</p> <p>A graphic narrative includes literary elements such as a problem, solution, plot, setting, characters, a narrator, and theme.</p> <p>A graphic narrative is enhanced by using literary techniques such as dialogue, sensory details, and pacing of plot that work simultaneously with paneled still images for a desired effect.</p> <p>Character development is enhanced in a graphic novel via actions, thoughts, dialogue, and symbolic images.</p> <p>A graphic narrative's conclusion provides a relevant resolution to the story's problem.</p> <p>Concise word choice is a necessary component of an effective graphic narrative.</p> <p>The writing process is not complete without significant revision and editing.</p> <p>Graphic artists often use technology to create their</p>	<p>Analyze and evaluate methods and reasoning behind the movement of plot, amplification of emotion, and shifting of time independent of words in a narrative.</p> <p>Identify and analyze the use of panel size and shape and the different feelings and emotions they evoke.</p> <p>Create a graphic narrative that communicates real or imagined experiences.</p> <p>Utilize literary elements for appropriate effect in a narrative piece.</p> <p>Utilize still images along with literary techniques such as dialogue, sensory details, setting, and pacing of plot to enhance the narrative.</p> <p>Use actions, thoughts, dialogue and still images to develop memorable and symbolic characters.</p> <p>Conclude a fictional story by evaluating the plot in order to ensure a logical ending.</p> <p>Select appropriate vocabulary to produce a clear and coherent graphic narrative.</p> <p>Analyze a draft, revise the content as needed and recognize and correct grammar, usage, and conventional errors.</p> <p>Use web resources to produce and publish graphic</p>
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<p>W.6.3.e Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.</p> <p>W.7.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>W.7.3.a Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</p> <p>W.7.3.b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p>W.7.3.c Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</p> <p>W.7.3.d Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</p> <p>W.7.3.e Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</p> <p>W.7.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)</p> <p>W.7.5 With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 7 <a href="#">here</a>.)</p> <p>W.7.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.</p> <p>W.8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined</p>	<p>narratives.</p> <p><b>Key Terms</b></p> <p>Narrative Elements</p> <p>Point of View</p> <p>Perspective</p> <p>Analyze</p> <p>Summarize</p> <p>Infer</p> <p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>Icon</p> <p>Gutter</p> <p>Closure</p> <p>Bleed</p> <p>Panel</p> <p>Word Specific</p> <p>Picture Specific</p> <p>Duo-Specific</p> <p>Additive</p> <p>Parallel</p> <p>Montage</p> <p>Interdependent</p> <p>Moment to Moment</p> <p>Action to Action</p> <p>Subject to Subject</p> <p>Scene to Scene</p> <p>Aspect to Aspect</p> <p>Non-Sequitur</p> <p>Amplification</p>	<p>narratives.</p>
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<p>experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>W.8.3.a Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</p> <p>W.8.3.b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p>W.8.3.c Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.</p> <p>W.8.3.d Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</p> <p>W.8.3.e Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</p>		
<p><b>ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE:</b> <i>Students will show their learning by the following techniques, including but not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grand Discussions</li> <li>• Think-Pair-Shares</li> <li>• Exit Tickets</li> <li>• Cartoon Strip with narrative</li> <li>• Written analytical responses</li> <li>• Graphic Novels</li> </ul> <p><b>KEY LEARNING EVENTS AND INSTRUCTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessments to adjust instruction</li> <li>• Mini-lessons targeting reading and writing of graphic novels</li> <li>• Final graphic novel project</li> </ul>		

**RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Comic Book Theory: Understanding the Graphic Novel**  
**Curriculum Pacing Chart**

<b>SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT</b>	<b>CONTENT-UNIT OF STUDY</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES</b>
<b>9 weeks</b>	Comic Book Theory: Understanding the Graphic Novel	<p><i>Bone, Out from Boneville</i> by Jeff Smith  <i>The Lightning Thief</i> by Rick Riordan  <i>Knightfall</i> by Chuck Dixon  <i>Understanding Comics, The Invisible Art</i> by Scott McCloud  <i>How to Read Superhero Comics and Why</i> by Geoff Klock</p> <p>Websites for digital graphic narrative creation:  <a href="http://www.bitstrips.com/create/comic/">www.bitstrips.com/create/comic/</a>  <a href="http://www.marvelkids.com/shows/">www.marvelkids.com/shows/</a></p>

## Appendix A

### Graphic Narrative Rubric

<b>Written Content:</b> 1. Narrative follows a planned out story arc and matches one of the 5 theories discussed in class. 2. Characters have obstacles that are developed throughout the story. 3. Main character demonstrates heroic traits and a reluctance to achieve his/her goal. 4. Dialogue is concise and drives the plot.	<b>Possible Points</b> <b>40</b>	<b>Points You Earned</b> _____
<b>Graphic Content:</b> 1. Images show feelings and emotions that create a desired mood. 2. At least two image/word combinations are utilized. 3. Passage of time is portrayed accurately. 4. Closure is demonstrated through use of visual transitions. 5. Main character demonstrates heroic traits and a reluctance to achieve his/her goal.	<b>Possible Points</b> <b>50</b>	<b>Points You Earned</b> _____
<b>Presentation:</b> 1. Final piece looks like maximum effort was employed. 2. Submitted on time.	<b>Possible Points</b> <b>10</b>	<b>Points You Earned</b> _____

Teacher's Comments:

Total Points: \_\_\_\_\_/100

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Image/Word Combination Exit Ticket**

**Directions:** What did you do over the past weekend? Use the two image/word combinations we worked on in class to recreate those experiences.

In panel A create a Word Specific image/word combination.

In panel B create a Picture Specific image/word combination.

A



B

